

Message Text

SECRET

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ACTION SS-25

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SSO-00 NSCE-00 /026 W

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O R 041215Z JAN 75

FM AMEMBASSY JIDDA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC NIACT IMMEDIATE 9716

INFO AMEMBASSY ABU DHABI

AMEMBASSY AMMAN

AMEMBASSY MANAMA

AMEMBASSY BEIRUT

AMEMBASSY CAIRO

AMEMBASSY DOHA

AMEMBASSY KUWAIT

AMEMBASSY MUSCAT

S E C R E T JIDDA 0032

EXDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, ENRG, SA, US

SUBJECT: SAUDI CONCERN OVER BUSINESS WEEK INTERVIEW

SUMMARY: KING FAISAL AND SAG DISTURBED BY THREATENING IMPLICATIONS OF SECRETARY KISSINGER'S BUSINESS WEEK INTERVIEW. AMBASSADOR EXPLAINED SECRETARY'S STATEMENTS CONSISTENT WITH AND DID NOT GO BEYOND EARLIER EXPRESSIONS OF USG'S POSITION.

1. MOHAMMAD MAS'UD, SAUDI ACTING MINISTER OF STATE FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS, ON INSTRUCTIONS FROM HIS MAJESTY, ASKED TO SEE ME THIS MORNING (0800 GMT JAN 4) TO DISCUSS THE RECENT BUSINESS WEEK INTERVIEW WITH SECRETARY KISSINGER. HE SAID THAT KING FAISAL AND THE SAUDI GOVERNMENT WERE DISTURBED BY THE IMPLICATIONS OF MANY OF THE STATEMENTS MADE BY THE SECRETARY.

2. WHILE I WAS IN THE OFFICE MAS'UD TALKED WITH ROYAL ADVISOR PHARAON WHO, ACCORDING TO MAS'UD, SAID THAT
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"THIS REPRESENTS A COMPLETE CHANGE IN AMERICAN POLICY

AND WE MUST THEREFORE REVISE OUR OWN POLICY TOWARD THE UNITED STATES."

3. I TOLD HIM THAT IT WAS NO CHANGE IN POLICY; AND FURTHER MORE THAT I THOUGHT THERE WAS NOTHING IN THE ARTICLE THE SAUDIS COULD REALLY OBJECT TO. THERE WERE A FEW CASES WHERE THERE MIGHT BE DIFFERENCES IN INTERPRETATION OF EVENTS OR ATTITUDES BUT THAT WAS ALL.

4. MAS'UD SAID THE STATEMENT ON INVADING SAUDI ARABIA OR THE OTHER OIL PRODUCERS WAS CERTAINLY A NEW POSITION. I TOLD HIM IT WAS NOT; I HAD MADE THE SAME STATEMENTS IN FOREIGN AFFAIRS ARTICLE TWO YEARS AGO. THE SAUDIS KNEW MY VIEWS ON THE SUBJECT. I HAD STATED THEM OFTEN ENOUGH PUBLIC IN THE U.S. AND TO THEM IN PRIVATE: INVASION WOULD BE MADNESS BUT WHEN COUNTRIES ARE REDUCED TO DESPERATION THEY TAKE "MAD" ACTIONS. IT WOULD BE FOOLISH FOR ANY OF US TO FORGET THIS. SECRETARY KISSINGER HAD SAID NO MORE.

5. MAS'UD SAID THAT THE STATEMENTS ON THE SAUDI POSITION ON OIL PRICES ALSO GROSSLY MISREPRESENTED THE SAUDI POSITION. THE SECRETARY KNEW THAT SAUDI ARABIA HAD HELD THE LEAD ON OIL PRICES. AND IT HAD TAKEN THE LEAD IN THIS; BUT IT COULD NOT BRING DOWN PRICES WITHOUT THE SUPPORT OF ITAN (ALGERIA AND SYRIA, HE SAID, WERE IRRELEVANT). WHY DID THE SECRETARY SAY THAT SAUDI ARABIA WAS A MERE PASSIVE FOLLOWER?

6. I EXPLAINED THAT THE SECRETARY DID INDEED KNOW THE SAUDI POSITION; THAT THIS HAD BEEN EXPLAINED FREQUENTLY TO HIM BY ME, HIS MAJESTY, AND OTHERS, BUT THAT THE SECRETARY'S STATEMENT WAS NOT ONLY PERFECTLY COMPREHENSIBLE BUT IT WAS TRUE. SAUDI ARABIA WOULD NOT TAKE THE LEAD IN REDUCING OIL PRICES FOR A VARIETY OF REASONS. IN FACT, SAUDI ARABIA HAS RECENTLY TAKEN THE LEAD IN ABU DHABI AND THE RESULT WAS A PRICE INCREASE.

7. MAS'UD TOOK CAREFUL NOTES, SAID THAT HE WAS LOOKING FORWARD TO OUR TRANSLATION OF THE BUSINESS SECRET

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WEEK INTERVIEW AND ALSO THE PRESS INTERVIEW OF THE SECRETARY WHICH I PROMISED HIM BY TOMORROW. HE SAID HE ASSUMED HE, RASHAD PHARAON, OR THE KING WOULD WANT TO TALK WITH ME AGAIN ABOUT IT.

8. ACTION REQUESTED: GIVEN THE SAUDI'S SENSITIVITY, I WOULD APPRECIATE ANY ADDITIONAL INFORMATION OR MESSAGE FROM THE SECRETARY TO PASS TO THE SAUDIS

TOMORROW (JAN 5) OR MONDAY. IN THE ABSENCE OF
FURTHER WORD FROM THE DEPARTMENT I WILL REPEAT THE LINE I HAVE
DESCRIBED ABOVE.
AKINS

SECRET

NNN

Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: Z
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: WAR, PRESS CONFERENCES, INVASIONS, GOVERNMENT REACTIONS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 04 JAN 1975
Decaption Date: 28 MAY 2004
Decaption Note: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: greeneet
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1975JIDDA00032
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Film Number: D750004-0636
From: JIDDA
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1975/newtext/t19750178/aaaacqfx.tel
Line Count: 119
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Office: ACTION SS
Original Classification: SECRET
Original Handling Restrictions: EXDIS
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 3
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: SECRET
Previous Handling Restrictions: EXDIS
Reference: n/a
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: greeneet
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 30 JUL 2003
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <30 JUL 2003 by ElyME>; APPROVED <16 SEP 2003 by greeneet>
Review Markings:

Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
05 JUL 2006

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: SAUDI CONCERN OVER BUSINESS WEEK INTERVIEW SUMMARY: KING FAISAL AND SAG DISTURBED BY THREATENING
TAGS: PFOR, MPOL, ENRG, XF, US, SA, (KISSINGER, HENRY A), (FAISAL)
To: STATE
Type: TE
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 05 JUL 2006